

Whereas the position currently held by Lieutenant General Boykin requires him to interact routinely with Muslims from all over the world;

Whereas Lieutenant General Boykin has failed to retract his remarks or to issue a full apology for those controversial and divisive statements;

Whereas the remarks made by Lieutenant General Boykin have impaired the image of the United States worldwide and threaten to endanger United States forces in Iraq and Afghanistan; and

Whereas such remarks by a high-ranking military official undermine the war on terrorism by insulting Muslim allies of the United States and Muslim citizens of the United States, including those Muslim citizens in the United States Armed Forces: Now, therefore, be it

*Resolved*, That the House of Representatives—

(1) condemns bigotry and intolerance against any religious group, including people of the Islamic faith; and

(2) calls on the President—

(A) to clearly censure Lieutenant General William Boykin, United States Army, for his religiously intolerant remarks against people of the Islamic faith; and

(B) to reassign Lieutenant General Boykin to a new position in which his views will not impact United States Government policy decisions toward Muslims.

#### HOW IS A SURGEON TO SURVIVE IN BUSINESS?

The SPEAKER pro tempore (Mr. PORTER). Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Georgia (Mr. GINGREY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

Mr. GINGREY. Mr. Speaker, I rise again this week as I have done in previous weeks to call attention to declining Medicare reimbursement for physicians. Effective January 1, 2004, physicians and other providers paid pursuant to the Medicare physician fee schedule face at least a 4.2 percent cut in reimbursements.

For nearly 40 years, Medicare has provided necessary health care to those millions of patients across this country. Another steep cut in reimbursement rates is now forcing many physicians who care for Medicare patients to make very difficult choices. Complicating the situation, Mr. Speaker, further, is the fact that doctors in some areas are experiencing double and even triple-digit percentage increases of their liability premiums. In a host of States, like my State of Georgia, surgeons are scrambling to find affordable liability insurance, if it is available at all.

When doctors are forced out of practice, patient access to care is further compromised. Fewer doctors overall translates into greater difficulty obtaining an appointment for every patient but especially those who rely on Medicare.

Earlier this year we passed H.R. 5, the HEALTH Act to combat the problem of increased liability premiums at the Federal level. Unfortunately, this commonsense legislation has now languished in the Senate. I reiterate my support for this bill, and I urge its

swift passage by the entire Congress so that President Bush can sign it into law this year.

Until that time, however, one of the main costs of running a medical practice for many high-risk specialists, including general surgeons, will continue to be liability insurance. Looking at this chart, you can easily see that increases in liability premiums have grossly outpaced Medicare reimbursement.

Using information collected by the independent trade publication Medical Liability Monitor, this chart compares the average liability premiums for general surgeons to the Medicare physician payment update. In 2001, physicians received a 5.1 percent Medicare payment update. During that same period liability premiums increased 14.6 percent. Then the next year Medicare physician payments were cut 5.4 percent. While doctors are trying to manage this cut, their liability premiums spiked to an additional 29 percent. There is no doubt that at least with respect to liability premiums, Medicare reimbursement continues to fall far behind the cost of doing business.

As an OB/GYN myself, I can assure you that a physician's practice is indeed a small business. When faced with decreasing income and soaring expenses, doctors cannot simply increase the cost of patient visits. To keep medical practices open, doctors make tough choices. Some doctors delay the purchase of new equipment; others reduce the size of the staff. Many increase the percentage of non-Medicare patients they see, leaving insufficient time in a busy schedule to see a sufficient number of Medicare patients.

Mr. Speaker, I would like to relay a story that demonstrates just how the cuts in physician reimbursements are affecting medical practices in my home State of Georgia. Dr. Harry Sherman, former president of the Georgia chapter of the American College of Surgeons, has lived in Georgia for more than 70 years. He remembers when Congress first enacted Medicare. Now, about 40 percent of his surgical patients are Medicare.

I recently had an opportunity to speak with Dr. Sherman at the American College of Surgeons annual meeting in Chicago. During our conversation, it became clear to me that Dr. Sherman obtains a great deal of personal satisfaction from treating Medicare patients.

As a physician myself, I understand that unique bond that develops between doctor and patient, but as the cost of doing business continues to increase and the level of reimbursement drops, further and further, he admits that it influenced his decision about when to retire.

Dr. Sherman is one of Georgia's most seasoned surgeons. He was born and raised in Georgia, and is truly an asset to his community and his patients. When continued Medicare payment cuts are forcing good surgeons like Dr.

Sherman to retire for financial reasons, something is badly wrong.

One of the greatest achievements of the Medicare program is the access to high-quality care it has brought to our Nation's seniors and disabled patients. This level of access cannot be expected to continue in the face of deep Medicare cuts and growing liability premiums.

Mr. Speaker, doctors are the linchpin of the Medicare system. Let us not force them out of the system. Stop the 4.2 percent Medicare physician cut; help doctors help those who need their care the most.

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentleman from Oregon (Mr. DEFAZIO) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mr. DEFAZIO addressed the House. His remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from the District of Columbia (Ms. NORTON) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Ms. NORTON addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

#### OXI DAY

The SPEAKER pro tempore. Under a previous order of the House, the gentlewoman from New York (Mrs. MALONEY) is recognized for 5 minutes.

(Mrs. MALONEY addressed the House. Her remarks will appear hereafter in the Extensions of Remarks.)

Mrs. MALONEY. Mr. Speaker, today I join people of Greek descent in Astoria, New York, the country, and the world in saluting the courageous acts of the Greeks against Mussolini and Hitler.

October 28, 2003, marks the 63rd anniversary of a very historic day in Greek history. On October 28, 1940, the Italian Minister in Athens gave an ultimatum to the Prime Minister of Greece, demanding the unconditional surrender of Greece. His answer was "Oxi," which means "no" in Greek.

Military success for the Italians would have sealed off the Balkans from the south and helped Hitler's plan to invade Russia. In fact, the Italian army was fully equipped, well supplied, and backed by superior air and naval power. They were expected to overrun Greece within a short time. Fortunately, the Greek Army proved to be well trained and resourceful despite their lack of military equipment.

In less than a week after the Italians first attacked, it was clear that their forces had suffered a serious setback in spite of having control of the air and fielding armored vehicles. On November 14th, the Greek Army launched a counteroffensive and quickly drove Italian forces far back into Albania. On December 6th, the Greeks captured Porto Edda and continued their advance along the seacoast toward Valona. By February 1, 1941, the Italians had launched strong counterattacks, but the determination of the Greek Army coupled with the severity of the winter weather, nullified the Italians' efforts.